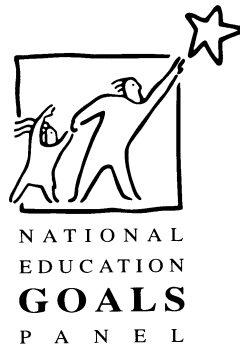


LESSONS FROM THE STATES

Video Teleconference Facilitator's Guide



**Live from The National Press Club, Washington, D.C.
Thursday, December 10, 1998, 1:30 to 3 p.m. EST.**

Presented by

The National Education Goals Panel

In cooperation with:

The National Governors' Association

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The National Conference of State Legislatures

The National Alliance of Business/Business Coalition for Education Reform

The Council of Chief State School Officers

The National Association of State Boards of Education

SATELLITE COORDINATES

For Lessons From The States

GE GE-2 C-band at 85 degrees West Longitude

Transponder 3

Downlink polarity - Vertical

Downlink frequency - 3760

Audio - 6.20/6.80

Uplink frequency - 5985

Phone number for audience call-ins: (800) 283-1479.

Important Information for Participants

The National Education Goals Panel and its partners will broadcast *Lessons From The States* through satellite transmission.

Recipients tuning in to the downlink coordinates will see a test pattern beginning at 1:15 p.m., Eastern Time. This test pattern will remain on-screen until 1:30 EST., when *Lessons From The States* teleconference begins. **For proper reception, please tune in early.**

During the program, viewers can call in questions to the panelists by dialing the toll-free number listed above, (800) 283-1479. Your call will be answered by a teleconference representative, who will take your question. You will be put on hold until there is an opportunity to ask the question. While on hold, you will be able to hear the teleconference through the telephone. Please stay on the line during this time so that we can communicate with you if necessary. If the line is busy when you call, please try again. If time does not permit answering all calls, the Goals Panel will respond to every question left by anyone leaving their name, address and phone number with their question.

There may be a time delay between what you hear over the telephone and what you hear as you watch the teleconference. To minimize any technical problems that may be caused by audio feedback, we recommend you locate the telephone away from the speakers at your site.

November 18, 1998

Dear Colleague:

I am very pleased to offer the following facilitator's guide to the 1998 National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) *Lessons From The States* teleconference. This is an important opportunity for us to bring visibility to the excellent work being done on the state and local level to train better teachers, strengthen parental involvement and, most important, boost student achievement. We're very pleased that you are joining us – and especially hopeful that you will invite your colleagues to participate in the event as well.

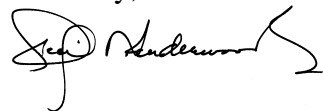
Those of you who are familiar with the NEGP probably know us best for the role we have played over the past eight years in reporting national and state progress toward reaching the National Education Goals set by the President and the nation's Governors in 1990. This continues to be an important task, showing the results states are achieving so we can benchmark performance for our own communities and for the nation as a whole. This year we are taking a major step forward. More than ever, we are focusing not only on how well we're doing in reaching the National Education Goals, but on the *Lessons From The States* that can speed our progress along the way. On December 10, these lessons will be detailed in a teleconference and through the release of two new Goals Panel reports:

- ***Promising Practices, Lessons from the States, 1998***, which describes specific initiatives communities have created to stimulate progress toward all eight of the National Education Goals – and focuses on North Carolina and Texas, which have defied conventional wisdom about education by helping their diverse students post some of the highest average student achievement gains in the nation; and,
- ***Talking About Tests, An Idea Book for State Leaders***, which offers recommendations and techniques to communicate with parents and the public about academic standards and student assessment results.

It's often said that there's no problem in American education that is not already solved in some American school or school system. The pressing need is to discover the practices that are working, and the lessons we can all learn as we strive to improve achievement and opportunities in our own communities. *Lessons From The States* is our opportunity to do so.

On behalf of our presenters, and of all of us at the Goals Panel, thank you again for helping us share the news.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cecil H. Underwood", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cecil H. Underwood
Governor, West Virginia

INTRODUCTION

The *Lessons From The States* teleconference is being produced by the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) and its partners as a service to educators, policymakers, business leaders, parents and others in search of information about what's working to improve student achievement.

The material for the teleconference is drawn largely from two new NEGP reports: ***Promising Practices; Progress Toward the Goals, 1998***, and ***Talking About Tests, An Idea Book for State Leaders***. These reports will be released in conjunction with the ***1998 National Education Goals Report, Building a Nation of Learners***, which provides an view of national and state progress toward meeting the National Education Goals detailed on the back cover of this booklet.

In preparing the *Promising Practices* report, the NEGP selected one indicator for each of the eight national education goals, and asked the questions, "Which states have made the most progress in this area? Which states performed at the highest level? Which states show the most progress across all the goals and indicators? And why?"

Throughout 1998 the *NEGP Monthly* conducted interviews with policymakers in the states that have performed well and/or made extraordinary improvements in the indicators used to measure progress toward the Goals. Recognizing the extraordinary gains of two states in particular – North Carolina and Texas – the Goals Panel also commissioned a research report to look at what lessons could be learned. Written by David Grissmer and Ann Flanagan, *Exploring Rapid Achievement Gains in North Carolina and Texas* investigates the factors that accounted for the significant gains both states posted on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Between 1990 and 1997 North Carolina and Texas posted the largest average gains in the country on assessments of math and reading. The NAEP results are mirrored in state assessments administered during the same period, and there is evidence that the scores of disadvantaged students improved more rapidly than those of advantaged students.

At the same time, the Panel took a closer look at some issues especially important for setting high standards and expectations for what our children should know and be able to do. More and more, states are aligning these high expectations with their assessment systems. But these tools – standards and assessments – will amount to very little unless parents are aware of them and can understand them. *Talking About Tests* is an "idea" book for educators and policymakers striving to both communicate with parents about these assessments – and to use them as a tool to help students do better.

Lessons from the States is our opportunity to share some of the best information in both of these reports as a service to state and local communities facing similar challenges throughout the nation.

Program Agenda

Video Introduction The Nation's Progress

An overview of news reported in conjunction with the release of the 1998 National Education Goals Report charting the progress of the nation in reaching the National Education Goals.

Welcome and Introduction

John Merrow

Nationally recognized commentator and education expert John Merrow welcomes *Lessons From The States* participants and guests, provides an overview of the program.

Sharing Solutions: *Lessons From The States*

Governor Underwood

West Virginia Governor and Goals Panel Chairperson Cecil H. Underwood discusses the importance of sharing solutions and offers an overview of what can be learned from *Lessons From The States*.

Promising Practices

John Merrow

An overview of key findings from the *Promising Practices* report, with lessons that can be learned from a variety of states that have shown measurable progress toward:

Goal 1 – Readiness to Learn

Goal 2 – High School Completion

Goal 3 – Student Achievement and Citizenship

Goal 4 – Teacher Education and Professional Development

Goal 5 – Mathematics and Science Achievement

Goal 6 – Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

Goal 7 – Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools

Goal 8 – Parental Participation

-- and --

Systemic Reform: successful practices from North Carolina and Texas

Report from North Carolina

Governor Jim Hunt

North Carolina Governor and Chair of the National Education Goals Panel in 1997 Jim B. Hunt provides overview of factors that led to systemic reform.

**Business and Education,
A Partnership for the 21st Century**

Edgar Murphy

North Carolina business representative Edgar Murphy gives a first-hand account of how the business community joined educators to drive progress in key Goal areas across a seven-year period in that state.

Report from Texas

Governor George W. Bush

Via videotape, Governor George W. Bush shares insight on the strategy for success in Texas.

Systemic Reform, A Lesson in the Making

Senator Teel Bivens

Senator Bivens tells the story behind the key factors identified through a recent Goals Panel report that have led to measurable progress over the same seven-year period in Texas.

Questions and Answers

In Studio and Via Phone

Presenters take questions from policymakers in attendance and from teleconference viewers via telephone.

Talking About Tests

John Merrow

John Merrow discusses results of focus groups in which parents discuss what they're looking for in reports on their children's tests – and shares insight from the *Talking About Tests* report on what state and local policymakers have learned.

**Public Awareness and Political Support
A Partnership for Learning**

Bill Porter

Bill Porter of the Washington Partnership for Learning discusses how this organization gained public support for a broad, statewide effort to develop high standards for student achievement, and align them with tests that clearly measure progress.

**Listening to Parents
A Critical Link for Communicating Results**

Dr. Iris Metts

Dr. Iris Metts, the Secretary of Education in Delaware, describes how this state has succeeded in creating a system for clear reporting to ensure parents understand their children's assessment results – and know what they can do to help improve them.

Questions and Answers**In Studio and Via Phone**

Presenters take questions from policymakers in attendance and from teleconference viewers via telephone.

A Look Ahead:**The Future of the National Education Goals****Speaker TBA**

Governor John Engler of Michigan discusses the day's earlier discussion on the Future of the National Education Goals, and on the recommendation that will be made to Congress regarding reauthorization for the Goals 2000 legislation.

Setting the Pace**Governor Tom Carper****The Role of the Nation's Governors**

Via video, Governor Tom Carper of Delaware, the Chair of the National Governor's Association, discusses the leadership role of Governors in driving the education reforms that will boost student achievement throughout the next decade.

Making Strides**State Representative****The Role of State Legislators****Dan Blue**

Dan Blue, Chair of the National Conference of State Legislatures, discusses the critical role that state legislators can play in this process.

Closing Remarks**John Merrow**

Sharing the News: Suggestions for Turning Promising Practices into Action

The *Lessons From The States* teleconference is designed to be as an interactive opportunity to learn and share information about some of the most *Promising Practices* for reaching education goals and boosting student achievement. In addition to posing questions to the program presenters, you may choose to convene your colleagues to both view the program and discuss how these practices may be tested and implemented in your own community.

This facilitator's guide includes a series of materials that can help make this process easier. On the following pages, you will find:

- **A Facilitator's Checklist**, offering tips for boosting attendance at your downlink site, preparing for your own group discussion, and developing an Action Plan to put your group's good ideas to work.
- **A Sample Agenda** for your pre and post-teleconference discussion.
- **Sample Welcoming Remarks** that you might use as a site facilitator and discussion leader.
- **Executive Summaries of *Promising Practices* and *Talking About Tests***, as resource materials for review during the program.
- **Discussion Questions** that may be useful for your group to consider as you put *Lessons From The States* to use in your own community.
- **Sample Newsletter/listserv/PSA copy** that you may use to generate attendance for your discussion group around the *Lessons From The States* teleconference.
- **Tips for Boosting Local Visibility and Involvement in the Teleconference.**

In addition, please note the **Evaluation Form** on the last page of this Facilitator's Guide. This provides an opportunity for viewers and participants in the *Lessons From The States* teleconference to let the Goals Panel and its partners gauge the effectiveness of this event.

Also, please note that the **Introduction** of this guide, along with the **Program Agenda**, **Executive Summaries**, **Discussion Questions**, and **Evaluation Form** are all designed to be photocopied as handouts for easy distribution to your local discussion group participants.

Facilitator's Checklist

1. Before the *Lessons From The States* teleconference:
 - Review the list of attendees for your discussion group and follow-up to remind them of the event.
 - Send out notice of the event in your organization's newsletter or list-serve to boost attendance.
 - Check the NEGP Website at www.negp.gov to make sure you are listed as a downlink site. Please contact Justin Perras at 202/667-0901 if you are not appropriately listed.
 - Read through this Facilitator's Guide, and share the background information presented in the Introduction and Program Agenda sections if possible. This will enable your participants to think about the program in advance, and to begin pinpointing the information that will be most useful to them.
 - You may want provide a beverage or invite people to bring their lunch.
2. Just prior to and during the teleconference:
 - Arrive at the viewing site one-hour before your guests.
 - Make a final check on all site logistics.
 - Call the group to order just before the live teleconference begins, and review the agenda with the participants, including the time you will spend in discussion afterwards.
 - Review the phone-in procedures for participants, point out the location of phones, and be prepared to assist with the call-ins if necessary.
3. After the teleconference:
 - Encourage further discussion and planning.
 - Keep the meeting focused, but leave strategy and tactics open. Be flexible.
 - Encourage each member of the group to contribute to your Action Plan if one is planned. This way people will be enthusiastic about the plan, and more apt to stay involved.
 - Conclude your meeting by writing down your Action Plan – a strategy that will help you put some of these lessons to use.
 - Ask participants to fill out an evaluation form as soon as the program concludes. Send the evaluation form, along with your own evaluation, to:

The National Education Goals Panel
1255 22nd St., NW, Suite 502
Washington, D.C. 20037
Phone (202) 724-0015 Fax (202) 632-0957
Email to negp@ed.gov

FOR FURTHER UPDATES ON THE TELECONFERENCE GO TO OUR WEB SITE AT
www.negp.gov

Lessons From The States
An Agenda for Local Discussion Groups

1. Welcome

- Brief remarks from the discussion leader/site facilitator
- Check to make sure everyone is signed in
- Introductions of special guests
- Overview of teleconference program agenda and any related participant materials
- Review telephone call-in procedure

2. View *Lessons From The States* Teleconference

- Help anyone who chooses to call in a question

3. Open Post-Conference Discussion

- Discuss program content
- Determine viable applications of *Lessons From The States* for relevant state and local education challenges

4. Consider Possible Action Plans

- Discuss short and long term steps for moving forward
- Set specific goals and objectives for each step
- Reach agreement on how to accomplish each step
- Assign responsibilities and create a timeline
- Determine how to gauge the success of your efforts

5. Review Next Steps

- Plan for subsequent meetings and progress reports
- Plan to notify and engage those who could not attend or participate in this discussion group

Lessons From The States
Sample Opening Remarks for Local Facilitators

(Please use or modify this language to suite your own gathering and needs)

Hello, I am _____ from _____ and I am serving as the site facilitator and discussion leader for this gathering. We are here to learn more about some of the “promising practices ” we might be able to implement here in _____ to improve education for our students.

Before we begin, I would like to introduce a few special guests who have joined us here today. . .

Now I’d like to say a few words to set the context for what we’re about to see. The *Lessons From The States* teleconference has been produced by the National Education Goals Panel. Those of you not familiar with the Goals Panel have probably nevertheless heard about its annual Goals Report, which shows the progress the nation and the states are making toward achieving the National Education Goals. The process for setting these Goals began in 1990 at a summit convened by the President and the nation’s Governors to set a framework for systemic education reform. These Goals are summarized on the attached handout.

This year, the Goals Panel has focused on identifying promising state practices for improving education. This year, for the first time, the Panel has produced the *Lessons From The States* teleconference to focus attention on the extraordinary success of some state and – more importantly – on the practices that our colleagues in those states feel have contributed strongly to their success.

During the teleconference, we all have the opportunity to call in with questions to the presenters. Afterwards, I’d like to spend some time discussing what we might be able to learn from this program, and, more importantly, how we might translate that into action here in _____.

Each of you should have a packet of materials with general background information on the program. We also have copies of the actual reports, *Promising Practices* and *Talking About Tests*, for your review. Keep in mind this is a live broadcast. If your call is taken on the air, you need to keep your questions focused so others can participate.

Thank you.

Promising Practices, Lessons from the States, 1998
Talking About Tests, An Idea Book for State Leaders
An Introduction to the Findings

This information is being provided as an executive summary of the findings in the *Promising Practices* and *Talking About Tests* reports as background for participants in the *Lessons From The States* teleconference. For copies of the full reports, please contact Justin Perras at The National Education Goals Panel by telephone at (202) 667-0901.

Highlights from Promising Practices: Lessons from the States

GOAL 1: *Ready to Learn (Immunization of two-year-olds)*

To increase 2-year-olds' immunizations, high-performing and high-improving states have found that grassroots efforts, targeting pockets of need, and developing immunization registries help to improve the number of 2-year-olds who are up-to-date in their shots.

Connecticut

Connecticut in 1997 had 87% of its two-year olds immunized, making it among the top-performing states in the nation on this indicator. Its success was due to a targeted outreach and referral program, and an enhanced immunization registry. Connecticut used federal funds to develop infrastructure in 12 municipalities deemed high risk and allowed free-of-charge vaccines to all children in the state.

Maine

In 1994, 82% of Maine's two-year-olds were immunized. State and local efforts helped increase that figure to 87% in 1997, the second highest in the country. The difference is attributed to Bureau of Health field staff conducting a statewide survey of health care providers supplying childhood immunizations' medical charts. The Bureau also used funds from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to place Public Service Ads on daytime television drama and in power company bills. Maine has also begun the first web-based, multi-state registry offered to all health-care providers, including private practitioners.

Missouri

Missouri is among the states with the greatest increase in the percentage of two-year-olds immunized, from 64% in 1994 to 78% in 1997. In a public/private partnership, the Hallmark greeting card company designed and printed a card with a personal message from the Governor and his wife. The congratulatory card is sent to every parent of a newborn child with an immunization reminder. The card program reached neighborhoods where previous immunizations attempts failed.

GOAL 2: *High School Completion*

High school completion has become a must for students hoping to find a job and prosper in the information-based economy. The credential, the knowledge, and skills it represents increases a student's chances for a successful adult life. By the year 2000, the high school completion rate should be increased to at least 90%.

Maryland

Maryland increased its high school completion rate from 87% in 1990 to 95% in 1996, making it the top-performer and one of two top-improving states on this indicator. Initiated by the Maryland School Performance Program, each school and school system must report to the public and the legislature on school attendance and dropout rates, as well as testing scores and other data, creating effective incentives for local improvement efforts. Maryland's Tomorrow program focuses on school-to-work transition to support more than 7,000 at-risk youth. Another program, "Tech Prep" emphasizes technical student preparation for post-secondary technical study and entry-level careers.

Nebraska

Nebraska was a top-performer in 1990, with a 91% high school completion rate, and improved that performance in 1995 to 93%. One incentive for a high completion rate is that school districts applying for state lottery money or Goals 2000 funds must submit a school improvement plan addressing high school completion rates. Also, the family structure of most high schools contributes to the percentage. Many high schools offer schools-within-schools, providing at-risk students smaller classrooms and curriculum connected to the community and world-of-work. Mentoring, tutoring, and teen parents programs are extremely successful.

Tennessee

Tennessee is a top-improving state that has raised high school completion from 77% in 1990 to 84% in 1996. Local schools who meet or exceed state Department of Education standards, including a less than 10% dropout rate for grades 9-12, are eligible to share a monetary incentive award of \$500,000. Also, by law, students under 18 who apply for a driver's license must prove they are students, or have finished high school, or the equivalent; if the student drops out of school, their license is revoked.

GOAL 3: *Student Achievement and Citizenship (AP Exams)*

The Advanced Placement (AP) program began as an effort to make college-level instruction and credit available to high school students planning to go to college. Recently, the AP exams have become increasingly important in academic standards. While local districts determine whether to offer AP courses and which students may take

them, top-performing states encourage participation and provide funding to subsidize the test cost to students and teacher training costs for schools.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts was both a top-performer and a most improved state on this indicator. A state grant program provides incentives to school districts to start AP courses, \$500,000 for AP, \$440,000 for gifted and talented grants. Also, students who earn a “4” or better on two or more AP exams are awarded a Certificate of Mastery by the State Board of Education.

New Jersey

New Jersey is among both the top-performing and top-improving states in the number of students passing AP exams. 85% of all secondary schools in the state participate in the AP program, compared with the nation’s average of 52.9%. Despite steady increases in AP participation rates, the mean score of New Jersey students has remained relatively constant. Effort is being made to increase the number of AP courses in 28 of the state’s most impoverished districts.

Utah

Utah has among the highest rates of students with scores of 3 or better on AP exams. A 1984 law provides financial incentives to schools with the highest number of students passing AP exams with scores of 3 or better each year.

GOAL 4: *Teacher Education and Professional Development (Certificates and Degrees in Teaching Assignment)*

The report of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) and the surprising results of state efforts to test teachers have heightened interest about teacher qualifications. The Goals Panel in 1998 urged top state policymakers to support good professional development as a linchpin of efforts to raise academic standards in schools. Yet data show that nationally in 1994 only 63% of public secondary school teachers held an undergraduate degree in their main teaching assignment, and only 93% had a certificate in their main teaching assignment.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma is the only state that improved performance in the number of public school teachers with either a certificate or degree in the area of their main assignment. State officials realized they needed a competency-based approach to teacher training, rather than a system driven by credit hours and courses. Oklahoma is the first NCATE/State Partnership to have a majority of

its state-reviewed teacher education programs designated for “national recognition” by NCATE. A new teacher assessment includes a test of general knowledge (math, science, social studies, literature), professional education (child development and learning styles), and a subject matter test.

Minnesota

Minnesota leads the nation in the percentage of public secondary school teachers who hold a degree in their main teaching assignment at 81%. Licensing regulations have stipulated that teachers must have a major in their field since the early 1970's. Minnesota has also shifted to a new standards-driven model of training and professional development, requiring a common core of knowledge and skills for all beginning teachers.

GOAL 5: *Mathematics and Science (Math Achievement on NAEP)*

In October 1998, the Goals Panel issued a report showing every state's improvement in math and science over time, how each state compared to other states and countries, and how subgroups within each state compared.

Connecticut

Connecticut is both a top-performing state and a top-improving state in student math achievement. Resident wealth and high teacher salaries contribute to Connecticut's success, as do community and parental involvement, rigorous texts, curriculum, and assessment alignment. Connecticut's Project to Increase Mastery of Math and Science is a professional and leadership development program designed to train elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Texas

Although many Texas students are immigrants, qualify for Title I, and/or live in poverty, they perform well on the math portion of the NAEP exam (particularly at the fourth-grade level). High scores are attributed to a series of Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TASS) tests that students grades three through eight, and grade ten are required to take. Accountability occurs when the ratings of schools, based on the percentage of students passing the tests, are publicly reported. Rigorous state standards are aligned with TASS and rewards and sanctions are also associated with each school's performance.

Wisconsin

A statewide set of teacher intensive training academies in math and science, provided with the support of the business community, contributed to Wisconsin's high performance in math. Besides staff development programs, teachers review the state's math and science standards for students, study the curriculum, and determine ways to teach the curriculum in their specific area. The state's new performance assessment is aligned with the same student standards.

GOAL 6: *Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning (Post-Secondary Enrollment)*

The 1990's have seen a significant increase in the number and proportion of students continuing their education after high school. Some states have been partly successful due to new sources of financial support.

Georgia

The proportion of Georgia high school graduates enrolling in college has increased from 54% in 1992 to 59% in 1994. Community college enrollments increased by 25% alone. The increase is attributed to the HOPE scholarship program which allows Georgia high school students who earned at least a B average to attend any one of the state's colleges or universities tuition-free. There is a second chance to HOPE money too. If a student keeps a 3.0 in college, they qualify for HOPE their junior year. And if a HOPE freshman falls below a 3.0, they may work to bring their GPA back up and qualify for HOPE again their junior year.

Florida

Florida has increased its post-secondary enrollment from 45% in 1992 to 49% in 1994. One reason is the state's low tuition, including their caps on tuition increases per year. The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Act awards the students with a 3.0 GPA eligibility for 75% of tuition and fees at any Florida public or private college or university. Students with a 3.5 GPA may receive full tuition and fees plus a book allowance of \$600. Bright Futures is paid for with funds from the state lottery.

Mississippi

Mississippi is one of the top-performing and top-improving states on post-secondary enrollment, 69% in 1994 up from 61% in 1992. The increase is linked to several tuition assistance programs, including the William Winter Teacher Scholar Loan Program, the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Program, the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant Program, and the HELP Scholarship program for students of low-income families. The programs award monetary help to those students with GPAs of at least a 2.5.

GOAL 7: *Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools (Students Carrying a Weapon)*

Goals Panel data shows little progress toward Goal 7, and data is also unavailable on many states.

North Carolina

North Carolina is one of four states and a territory that reduced the percentage of public high school students who reported that they carried a weapon on school property, from 14% in 1993 to 9% in 1997. The Center has worked to provide information and solutions

on school violence through a toll-free number, web site, and library. The Center has also designed a variety of projects to address character education, safe school planning, alternative education programs for at-risk youth, and training of school officials and law enforcement officers. School Resource Officers have increasingly been assigned to permanently provide coverage to a school or set of schools. An attitude of zero tolerance and increased penalties associated with bringing and possessing firearms on school property have also contributed to the percentage reduction.

GOAL 8: *Parental Participation (Principals' Report of Parent Involvement)*

Only three states made a significant improvement on the problem of lack of parental involvement in schools.

Colorado

The percent of schools reporting minimal parental involvement dropped significantly in Colorado from 17% in 1991 to 8% in 1994. Parents became increasingly involved in their schools because of Title I requirements, the state's Goals 2000 program, and school improvement plans that require a school district accountability committee approval. Workshops were arranged to help parents ask the right kinds of questions, and publications (some published in Spanish) helped.

Indiana

Indiana decreased the percent of schools reporting minimal parent involvement from 19% in 1991 to only 9% in 1994. State efforts to raise student standards culminated in a standards task force that included strong parental representation. The National Parent Teacher Association indicated that Indiana's mandatory school improvement plans must include efforts to increase parental involvement. Local parent initiative continues to be the driving force; an example is a parent newsletter that explains issues to parents statewide in an informative and comprehensive manner.

California

The percentage of California schools with only minimal parental involvement decreased from 20% in 1991 to 11% in 1994. The California Department of Education has disseminated material about launching family-school compacts at the local level; state funds provide after-school parent education programs. Programs such as Head Start and Title I have also encouraged involvement. One local PTA program had great success by sending home weekly folders containing information for parents, creating a web site and hotline, and reformatting the monthly newsletter for families, informing them of school events.

Highlights from *Talking About Tests: An Idea Book for State Leaders*
Executive Summary of practices to be discussed in Lessons of the States

How Maryland Is Making Things Work

The current wave of school reforms in Maryland began with the release of the Maryland School Performance Report in November 1990. A brief press release guided media through their first foray into education accountability. A sparse 50-page booklet of numbers reported for the first time how school systems and the state performed on attendance, dropout, and basic skills graduation test—with checks to designate when state standards were met. While much of the public yawned, the media grappled to understand the numbers.

By 1993, the media were becoming more savvy, and the public asked why new state criterion-referenced tests in grades 3, 5, and 8 showed that no more than a third of these students were passing. The public was baffled when traditional multiple-choice, norm-referenced tests were replaced with tests where students occasionally worked in groups and solved problems, then explained their answers. Student performance assessments and the standards were incomprehensible, and parents wanted to know about technical assessment and instructional details that had previously been “insider stuff.” If reforms were to move forward, the language of reform would need to change, and the volume of information crafted for the public would need to increase dramatically.

Early on, public sentiment was gauged through analysis of newspaper clips from the state’s more than 200 large- and small- market newspapers. Liberal urban centers such as Baltimore and the Washington-Baltimore suburbs differed dramatically from more rural, conservative jurisdictions. Public meetings and dialogues with legislators and education stakeholders helped clarify which messages were resonating with public groups and which ones were not. The critical nature of clear and understandable descriptions of test, report card data, and reform strategies such as sanctions and rewards started to become clear.

Principals began receiving bi-weekly bulletins from the Department, and a publication for teachers, initially called Maryland Education Connections, was developed and piloted, eventually becoming *Maryland Classroom*. The four-page tabloid has become a mainstay of communications with teachers, focusing on information, success stories, and the most current news stories on reforms.

A 1994 survey by the Education Commission of the States helped for the first time to gauge the opinions of Maryland parents with those of parents from several other education reform states. The poll helped validate national polls that warned the public was impatient for accountability from their schools and angry when reforms seemed to stray from academics and the basics.

Among the communications products that emerged was a 30-page handbook for parents on the state's testing program for grades 3, 5, and 8—Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). In the first year of its publication, the handbook was well received by teachers and parents alike. However, it became clear that parents wanted to know how the day-to-day lives of their children would be better, and how they would be challenged. Consequently, the Parent Handbook on MSPAP was revised in its second year to become the *Parent Handbook for Better Schools*, outlining how school reform meant better teaching and learning and how MSPAP fit into that effort. Distributed initially to parents in the tested grades only, the publication was more recently sent to all parents in grades 1 through 8. A tear-off request form for more information, a toll-free phone line, and a web address listed in the booklet allows parents to access even more information. The web site, which registers more than 85,000 hits per month, shows the MSPAP information portion to be among the most popular features for users.

The Department has produced a series of one-page sheets in question-and-answer format and in clear language on nearly 40 topics. Three of those fact sheets describe what students experience as they sit down to take MSPAP. A series of posters also helps parents see samples of student responses to portions of MSPAP assessment tasks and a list of the basic skills and applications necessary to do well on each test item. Principals are encouraged to distribute the posters during parent conferences in which teachers and parents can talk about the expectations for higher student performance with concrete examples in hand.

Videos and other materials have been distributed to principals as well as a communications and resource binder to encourage a year-long stream of clear and understandable information on testing. Principals periodically receive copies of camera-ready newsletter columns from the State Superintendent that help keep parents up to date on reforms. These efforts seem to have helped ease a worrisome trickle of misinformation and myths propagated by opposition groups.

With the MSPAP experience in mind, Maryland has been working several years on a new set of high school graduation tests that will begin affecting the high school class of 2004 as those students enter grade 9 in the fall of 2000. A statewide task force developed the framework and the core learning goals for the tests over two years. Focus groups and polls of parents, teachers, and principals revealed the high level of support for higher expectations as well as worries over the details of implementation. Town meetings across the state conducted jointly by the Department and by the test designers aided the State Board of Education and State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick in developing a phase-in plan for the tests that responded to the concerns voiced by parents and educators that the tests would be too much too fast and that too many students would fail.

An extensive community effort by the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education has taken the messages on the new tests to the business community while student brochures and videos are on their way to middle schools to prepare students and their families for

the new academic focus anticipated in Maryland high schools. The *Maryland Classroom* and other communication tools continue a steady stream of information to schools, while newsletter columns are distributed to school principals, Parent Teacher Association groups, and other interested stakeholders. Recently, the Department has developed a dynamic display booth that operates at conferences and fairs across the state to disseminate materials and build awareness of reforms.

The complex demands for information and public engagement will only increase as Maryland continues its work on improving schools. Success will depend on ensuring that the public does not lose patience with education reformers as Maryland works its way through a gauntlet of issues to improve schools. The state believes that public involvement and engagement will be absolutely critical if taxpayers are expected to pay the bill for better schools.

For more information, contact Ron Peiffer, Assistant State Superintendent, at 410/767-0473.

How Delaware Is Making Things Work

A recent “back page” article in Education Week suggested what most educators have long understood: a child’s achievement can be heavily dependent on factors external to the classroom. For educators this should be seen as a challenge to be addressed, and it can only be addressed through a clear, coherent message.

To create this message in Delaware, we have tried hard to listen to parents. One of the things they said over and over again was “please tell us what our children need to do in order to do better.” We listened and the score report is that much improved as a result. But it doesn’t end there. Constant contact with the state’s parent organizations, presentations to PTA/PTO meetings, and participation in their conferences helped us work toward the ideal of a clear and coherent message, and we continue to do more.

Internally, we have initiated some relatively simple “programs” to help each of us say the same things when we present the testing program. For example, a set of overheads has been distributed to each person who presents the state testing program, along with instructions and training as to how to use them. All presenters are free to supplement the core presentation with information they find helpful so long as the core remains intact. The result is that each of us is saying the same thing.

Other means of ensuring a consistent message include brochures, an effective media strategy, interpretive guides to the score reports written for parents, etc. We are working hard to create a coherent system by planning each piece within the larger context of when parents will need information so that our effort of communicating has the highest possible chance for success.

Perhaps our most challenging communications effort is yet to come. Next fall, prior to the release of the proficiency levels on our state test that will drive our state’s accountability system, we will conduct public meetings and focus groups for the purpose of validating the cut points on the test. For example, one of the things we hope to do is to show the public what the cut point looks like on the reading test that will determine promotion, and then ask whether or not parents and other constituents support the cut point as set. Our intent is to make the cuts as explicit as possible with the expectation that the reaction will be to immediately form a team of parent, child and teacher that can work together in improving the student’s achievement. Again, only with a clear, coherent message will that be possible.

For more information, contact John Tanner, Director, Assessment and Analysis, 302/739-6700.

How the Prichard Committee (Kentucky) Is Making Things Work

What is the Prichard Committee?

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is a non-profit group of 96 volunteer citizens dedicated to improving education in Kentucky at all levels. It was originally appointed in 1980 to study higher education but became independent of government and broadened its scope to include elementary and secondary education in 1983. This independence allows it to speak out as a voice for citizens and parents, an element critical to its effectiveness.

Mission and Goals

The mission of the Prichard Committee is to provide a public voice advocating for vastly improved education for all Kentuckians. Its goals are to:

- speak out to see that progress in education is made;
- recommend solutions to problems;
- inform the public, legislators, governors, and education officials; and
- stimulate and work with local parents and citizens.

What Has Worked?

In 1984, the Committee held a statewide town forum to listen to public sentiment about education. Volunteers were recruited to organize local meetings through PTAs, the League of Women Voters, chambers of commerce, school districts, community colleges, and universities. A major business conducted a statewide ad campaign to encourage attendance. Kentucky Educational Television connected the 145 community meetings. More than 20, 000 citizens and parents gathered to talk about education, sending a resounding message to state policy makers—Kentucky citizens wanted better schools.

With the passage of the Kentucky's comprehensive, standards-based education reform in 1990, the Prichard Committee's role changed from advocating for legislation and funding to advocating for implementation of the new law. Recognizing that misinformation could easily sidetrack reform, the Committee refocused on informing the public as a major strategy in advocating for school improvement.

In 1991, with the assistance of the Prichard Committee, the business community created the Partnership for Kentucky Schools, which made a 10-year commitment to promote and support quality education. These two groups are housed together and they coordinate activities and collaborate to support reform efforts.

How Do They Communicate With and Listen to the Public?

In many cases, activities and programs of the Prichard Committee and the Partnership serve dual purposes—sharing information with the public and soliciting feedback. The following are examples:

- Eight regional coordinates work with local communities and parents to support efforts to improve student achievement; they share information with the public; they also listen to what parents and citizens are saying.
- “Parents and Teachers Talking Together,” four-hour structured dialogues focusing on expectations for students, are conducted in schools across the state; regional staff train volunteers, facilitators and support local hosts who organize these events; in its first three years, more than 5,500 parents and teachers had participated.
- A toll-free telephone line and a resource center make clear and accurate information available to the public; about 1,500 people use this line each year.
- The Partnership identifies and prepares Education Ambassadors, some of Kentucky’s most able high school students who promote school reform from a student perspective; with training, some of these students facilitate focus groups of other students.
- A speaker’s bureau offers knowledgeable speakers to local groups.
- For four years, a school bus outfitted as a traveling information exhibit on school reform traveled the state, stopping at schools, local fairs and festivals, and special events; more than 250,00 citizens toured the bus.
- Recently, to more fully engage parents in Kentucky’s standards-based education system, the Prichard Committee established the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership, along with the Kentucky PTA and the Association of Older Kentuckians. (See page 25 for more information.) Parents with leadership potential are identified with the help of former institute graduates, PTA, family resource centers, schools, and family literacy programs. Each year 200 participants are informed, trained and offered resources and technical support to get other parents involved in improving student achievement. One specific activity has parents examining student writing, creating a standard for good writing, and learning how they can help their children develop writing skills.
- The Partnership works closely with businesses to evaluate and support the work it does with schools. Activities include sponsoring conversations between business leaders and students; a brown bag lunch series at places of business; encouragement for employers to ask applicants for evidence of academic progress such as test results, portfolio entries, and high school transcripts; and production and distribution of a *KERA Briefing Notebook*; *Education: We Make It Our Business: A Planning and Resource Guide*; and *Ready for Work: Essential Skills for Kentucky Jobs*.

The Committee and Partnership work closely with state agencies, the state chamber of commerce, and all of the education associations to make maintain good communication and coordinate activities.

Other Communications Strategies

- **Reaching Higher**, a newspaper insert explaining assessment, was created and 1.3 million copies were distributed.
- Quarter page **ads**, donated to the Partnership, are placed every week in a major newspaper and are used to share information with parents about helping students reach higher levels of achievements.

- A **quarterly newsletter** is published and mailed to 15,000 parents and citizens.
- A **monthly column** is written by staff and distributed to the news media.
- **Guidebooks** on Kentucky school law, finance, and other programs are published and written in language understandable to the public.
- A **glossary of terms** and a description of **parents' rights and responsibilities** have been produced.
- An annual **Kentucky School Update**, offering information about each segment of the new system as changes have been implemented, had been produced.
- A series of 15-minute **videotapes** designed for use in schools and businesses was produced in collaboration with the Department of Education. It coordinated with a Partnership and Committee guidebook on the primary program.
- **Radio and television ads** have been used to share information.
- An active **relationship with education and editorial writers** in the state's news media is maintained, providing a source of information for those writing about education issues.
- **Materials are distributed** through volunteer members, regional staff, the resource center, family resource centers, media, schools, and PTAs.

Evaluation Directs Ongoing Work

The Committee and the Partnership adjust their work based on focus groups, research, internal and external evaluations, and feedback from parents and citizens through their ongoing programs.

For more information, contact Robert F. Sexton, Executive Director, at 606/233-849 or at admin@prichardcommittee.org.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The following questions are general ideas you can use to discuss the events in the *Lessons From The States* teleconference and relate to the activities and publications of your state.

Data Collection and Reporting

What ideas from the *Lessons From The States* teleconference might be implemented in our community? What would different groups have to do to implement this program?

How are we monitoring progress on the goals? How often do we update our statistics?

How are we reporting progress? How often do we update materials?

What data sources do we use? How verifiable is this data?

How can we best collect, measure, and report on data that compare:

- The same state, school and population group over time
- Different subgroups
- Individual achievement over time
- State to other states and regional and national average
- Public schools to private schools

Standards and Accountability

What initiatives mentioned in the *Promising Practices* report on Texas and North Carolina could be used in our state? What changes would be necessary to make that program succeed?

How can we adopt statewide standards that provide clear teacher objectives? How can we ensure that teachers use these standards?

How can we hold all students to the same standards? What can we do to make sure all students have a fair chance of meeting these standards?

How can we link statewide assessments to academic standards? What can we do to make sure that teachers receive these results in time and in a format that they can use to help students?

How can we improve our state accountability system? How can we ensure that disadvantaged schools are not penalized for serving harder-to-educate students?

How can the state increase local control and flexibility? How do you exchange greater autonomy for greater accountability?

How can the state use computers to provide instantaneous test scores and continual feedback? Is this the best possible use of technology?

How can we shift resources to schools with more disadvantaged students?

What additional goals are important for our state? How can these goals be measured?

How can we work to involve the business community? Leaders from minority and ethnic groups? Parents? Students themselves?

Questions on the Goals

Goal 1: Readiness

How are we measuring children's readiness for school? How are we monitoring early childhood health and nutrition? How are we determining preschool quality and regulating preschools?

How are we measuring parental reading to children? How can we encourage greater preliteracy activities?

Goal 2: School Completion

What is our current graduation rate and how is it measured? How do we determine why students drop out? What percentage of drop-outs return to school or obtain a GED?

Goal 3: Student Achievement

What percentage of students demonstrate competency in English, mathematics, science, history/social studies, and geography? How is this competence measured? What is the gap among different groups? Are scores improving, stagnating, or declining?

What percentage of students are competent in more than one language? What percentage of students enroll in and master advanced courses? Are certain groups over- or under-represented?

How do students learn citizenship? To what degree do students demonstrate responsible citizenship? How do you measure citizenship?

Goal 4: Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

How do our requirements for new teachers compare with those in other states? What percentage of new teachers meet these requirements and what percentage go through "alternative certification"? How do principals rate new teachers? What percentage of new teachers stay in teaching after their third year?

What provisions are made to encourage/require participation in professional development? What counts as professional development? What do teachers say about the effectiveness of these programs?

Goal 5: Math and Science

How do students in our state compare to students in other regions, the average for their ethnic group/income level, the nation overall, and other countries? How well do students master the math and science content included in the state standards?

What percentage of teachers have the resources to use effective instructional practices? What percentage of math and science teachers have at least a minor in their specialty area? What percentage are trained in the latest methods?

Do students have positive attitudes toward science and math? Do schools clearly establish science and math as priorities? How does the community support math and science achievement?

Goal 6: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

What percentage of adults are literate? How do these literacy rates vary according to adults with different backgrounds and income levels? How does our literacy rate compare with those from other states, our region, the nation, and other countries?

What percentage of our population have attended some college? What percentage graduate? What percentage of our high school graduates complete college? How are these percentages different for adults from different racial, ethnic, and income groups?

What percentage of adults have taken adult education courses? What percentage receive on the job training? What reasons do adults give to explain this choice? What role do businesses and community groups play in adult education?

Goal 7: Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools

What percentage of our students admit to using use drug and alcohol? What attitudes do students posses toward drugs? Have schools developed policies on drug use and if so how often are they used?

What percentage of students have experienced a violent act? What percentage of students have committed a violent act? What are the attitudes of parents, students, and teachers toward their safety in the school? How orderly are schools, as measured by the existence and enforcement of school pollicies on discipline, truancy, and tardiness?

Goal 8: Parental Participation

What percentage of parents enter the school building during the year and how frequently do they visit? What percentage of parents attend back to school events and parent

conferences? What percentage of teachers are in regular contact with parents? Are there differences among parents of different racial/ethnic/income groups?

What roles are available for parents in schools? What percentage volunteer? How do schools encourage greater parental participation? What training is provided to teachers and administrators about how to involve parents effectively? How are parents involved in the management of the school?

Reporting to Parents

What research did our state conduct on the readability and usefulness of state score reports? Based on this program, how well do you think parents understand your materials?

How do our reports: address parents' concerns, inform parents as to why the state is making these changes, help parents understand why scores may be low in the beginning and what will be done to improve scores over time, avoid overstating the importance of tests, answer common questions, provide examples, avoid jargon, and provide tips for parents?

How do our reports answer the key questions: How did my child do? What types of skills or knowledge does my child's performance reflect? How did my child perform in comparison to other students? What can I do to help my child improve?

What is our state doing to form coalitions of parents, businesses, and community groups to help schools set high standards and students improve?

Sample Newsletter/Listserv/PSA Copy

Changing the System and Boosting Achievement: Education Success Stories Worth Learning About

Would you like to learn how education, business and community leaders are working together to create extraordinary gains in preparing children to learn, improving the qualifications of teachers, strengthening parental involvement and – most important – boosting student achievement?

If so, come to _____ to view the *Lessons From The States* teleconference on December 10, 1998 from _____.

The teleconference takes place shortly after the release of the annual 1998 National Education Goals Report at a morning news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

In addition to finding out what's working across the nation, *Lessons From The States* will focus in particular on:

- "Promising practices" that have helped two states defy conventional wisdom about education by helping their students post some of the highest average student achievement gains in the nation; and,
- *Talking About Tests*, a new "idea book" with recommendations and techniques to communicate with parents and the public about academic standards and related student assessment results. lines

In addition to watching the video presentations and interactive panel discussions with Governors, educators, business leaders and activists, viewers at this meeting will be able to call or fax-in their comments and questions.

Following the teleconference will be a discussion on how some of these lessons may be applied to our own education reform efforts.

For more information, contact:

**FOR UPDATES ON THE TELECONFERENCE AND ON DOWNLINK SITES
AROUND THE U.S. BE SURE TO LOG ON TO THE NEGP WEB SITE AT**

www.negp.gov

TIPS FOR BOOSTING LOCAL VISIBILITY AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE *LESSONS FROM THE STATES* TELECONFERENCE

- ✓ **Prepare a news statement** from your office to release at the DC-based news conference and for circulation to media in your home state. Highlight results of gubernatorial initiatives, summarize and report on progress in the state and key communities, comment on decisions about the future of the goals, or issue a call-to-action based upon findings and actions released by the Goals Panel on December 10th.
- ✓ **Organize a small staff group to view the teleconference in your home state.** Participants could include co-workers in offices and agencies with whom you collaborate who will benefit from a discussion of “what’s working and why.” For information on viewing sites available in your community, contact Justin Perras at 202-667-0901 or justinp@twbg.com.
- ✓ **Host a discussion among state policymakers in conjunction with the teleconference.** Using sample letters of invitation, a suggested agenda, opening remarks, and discussion questions included in the NEGP teleconference facilitator’s guide, we encourage you to convene officials and staff from the governor’s office, state departments and boards of education, state legislators, as well as leaders from business and education groups for a review and analysis of practices yielding progress toward the Goals in other states and the lessons that can be learned or applied to policy initiatives in your state. Many of these individuals will be receiving notice of the teleconference through their membership organizations, which are collaborating with us in producing this telecast: National Governors’ Association, National Conference of State Legislators, Council of Chief State School Officers, National Alliance of Business, the US Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of State Boards of Education.
- ✓ **Host a community-based forum in conjunction with the teleconference.** Here, Governors can tout success for which they are responsible and build even more momentum for upcoming policy initiatives by inviting a broader group of representatives from the community to view the teleconference in a “town hall” style setting. Many members of over 300 national education, business and labor organizations, child and family interest groups, and community-based organizations interested in the Goals have received news of the teleconference and are eager to view the program. They would appreciate and benefit from your coordination of a post-telecast opportunity to discuss implications of the information featured in the news coverage and broadcast of the day.
- ✓ **Invite local reporters to attend a teleconference downlink hosted by your office.** Informed education reporters and others who cover Goal-related issues are, unfortunately, not going to be in Washington, DC on December 10th to attend the teleconference in person. They can, however, participate in the day’s events and get richer sense of the news being released by viewing the telecast (including a brief video news release summarizing

the morning news conference), particularly in the company policy makers' staff and other education leaders gathered at a downlink site in your home town.

- ✓ **Solicit and secure follow-up radio and TV talk show opportunities**, using the December 10th news pegs to showcase gubernatorial leadership, state progress and policy initiatives.
- ✓ **Solicit and secure local speaking opportunities** with reform-minded education, business, civic and community groups in your home state, creating further opportunities for media coverage and interviews around each speaking event.
- ✓ **Prepare and place opinion editorials** for daily and weekly newspapers in you home state or community, addressing points in the NEGP reports or featured in the teleconference.

Questions?

Call Ruth Chacon or Chris Beakey at 202-667-0901

NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

Goal One: All children will start school ready to learn.

- Ensure that all young children receive immunizations and comprehensive health screening and services.
- Increase access to affordable, high-quality developmental early education and care services in diverse settings.

Goal Two: The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

- Ensure the gap in high school graduation rates between students from minority backgrounds and their non-minority counterparts will be eliminated.

Goal Three: Students will demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter and will be prepared for a lifetime of continuous learning.

- Adopt content standards for student performance.
- Decentralize school management and governance to authorize more decision-making at the school level.
- Challenge parents to assume more responsibility for their children's learning.

Goal Four: Teachers will have access to programs to improve their skills and acquire the knowledge needed to instruct all students.

- Develop a teacher recruitment strategy for local teachers.
- Create a partnership among local schools, business, labor, and higher education institutions to support programs for professional development.

Goal Five: The U.S. will become first in the world in math and science.

- Increase by 50 percent the number of local teachers who have a substantive background in math and science.
- Strengthen math and science curriculum.

Goal Six: Every adult American will be literate and possess skills necessary in the global economy.

- Create accountability systems that establish clear performance expectations for all publicly supported education and training providers.
- Promote the development of inter-generational, workplace, and other literacy programs that provide instruction in a real-life context.

Goal Seven: Schools will be free of drugs, violence, firearms, and alcohol.

- Establish drug- and violence-free zones around schools.
- Establish drug and violence education through an appropriate health curriculum.

Goal Eight: Every school will promote parental involvement.

- Develop new roles for local PTAs.

CHECKLIST FOR HOLDING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY MEETING

Select a location that:

- ☐ Has satellite downlink capability
- ☐ Has a telephone for call-ins during the program
- ☐ Is familiar and accessible to persons with disabilities
- ☐ Has large enough space for all who might attend
- ☐ Has smaller rooms for break-out groups
- ☐ Has visible, adequate parking

Select a time that:

- ☐ Is convenient to most people—usually early evening
- ☐ Does not conflict with other group meetings

Setting up the location, provide:

- ☐ Clear directions to the site and specific rooms
- ☐ Chairs or tables configured to make people comfortable
- ☐ On-site child care if possible
- ☐ Sign-up sheet to keep track of everyone who attends
- ☐ Agendas, or copies of materials available to all participants
- ☐ Microphones or loud speakers to ensure everyone can hear
- ☐ Tape recording of the meeting

Ensure good turn-out for your meeting by:

- ☐ Contacting other community groups about the meeting
- ☐ Including a meeting notice in the local paper either on a community bulletin board or through a paid advertisement
- ☐ Asking your local radio station(s) to make a public service announcement
- ☐ Posting notices in common locations
- ☐ Asking your schools to distribute a flyer to students and parents

Set the process up to succeed:

- ☐ Have a clear agenda and goals to accomplish
- ☐ Choose an experienced facilitator(s) to lead discussion

Develop materials

- ☐ Create an agenda that people can keep
- ☐ Copy descriptions of the National Education Goals
- ☐ Copy a description of the Goals 2000 Educate America Act

John Merrow

Award-winning educational journalist, John Merrow, has brought educational and learning issues to the public's attention for 23 years. His roles as president of Learning Matters, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to improving public understanding of public education, and founder, host and executive producer of ***THE MERROW REPORT***, PBS' award-winning national documentary series on youth and learning, represent the culmination of Merrow's distinguished career as an educator and journalist.

Prior to establishing Learning Matters, Inc. and *THE MERROW REPORT*, John Merrow served as executive editor and host of *Learning Matters* on cable's Learning channel. *Learning Matters* was renamed THE MERROW REPORT when it transferred to PBS in 1992.

Viewers will remember John Merrow from his years as education correspondent for PBS' *The MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour* between 1985-1990. During this time, he was field correspondent for a special five-part PBS series called "Learning in America" (1989) and worked as a columnist for "Children: A Magazine for Parents" (1986-1988).

Prior to joining *The MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour*, Merrow produced and hosted "Your Children, Our Children," a seven-part documentary about children in America for PBS in 1984. The series was broadcast in English and Spanish and earned a national Emmy nomination for Community Service.

Merrow's career in broadcast journalism began in 1974 when he produced and hosted *Options in Education*, a weekly documentary program on National Public Radio that garnered more than two dozen awards for reporting, including the George Polk Award in 1982. In 1978, during the program's eight-year popular run, Merrow became the first reporter from National Public Radio to visit the People's Republic of China.

Following *Options in Education*, Merrow continued to attract listeners at National Public Radio by serving as a commentator for *Morning Edition*, *MarketPlace*, and *All Things Considered* from 1985-'91.

Merrow also continues to lecture on education and family issues at businesses, universities, and other groups nationwide. Since 1993, he has moderated nine national teleconferences, including one for the U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley's "Goals 2000" in June 1994.

John Merrow holds a B.A. in English from Dartmouth College, an M.A. in American Studies from Indiana University, an Ed.D in Education and Social Policy from Harvard University, and an honorary doctorate from Stockton State College. He began as an English teacher, first at Port Washington High School in Port Washington, New York,

and then at Virginia State College in Petersburg, Virginia and at a Federal Correctional Facility also in Petersburg, Virginia.

Dr. Merrow is Chair of the Alumni Council of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a Director of the Hechinger Institute and the Foundation for Excellent Schools.

Cecil H. Underwood
Governor, State of West Virginia

Governor Cecil H. Underwood brings a unique historical perspective and a progressive vision for the future to his office. He was first elected governor in 1956 as the youngest person ever to hold the state's highest office, and re-elected 40 years later as the most senior governor in the history of the state.

In 40 years between elections, Governor Underwood provided leadership in education as a college president and board chairman, worked as an executive in both the coal and chemical industries, presided over the creation of the technology-centered Software Valley and served on several charitable foundations and boards. This broad experience gives Governor Underwood a unique perspective on the importance of education, economic development, advanced technology and volunteerism in West Virginia's future.

As Governor, he has established five key areas of focus for his administration. By making improvements in technology, job creation efforts, education, government efficiency and health care delivery, Governor Underwood is committed to improving the lives of West Virginians.

During his first term, Governor Underwood laid the foundation for the state's interstate highway system, paving the way for economic diversification and development in West Virginia. Now, as the state's leading advocate of technology, he is paving the way for the state to maximize its economic potential in the Information Age through West Virginia's technology superhighway system.

Colleagues throughout the region and the nation have noticed his unique perspective and progressive vision by choosing the governor for leadership positions in several organizations. He has been elected chairman of the Southern Technology Council, the Southern Growth Policies Board, the Southern States Energy Board and the National Education Goals Panel. In addition, he is a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Regional Education Board and the board of directors for the Jobs for America's Graduates program.

Governor Underwood is a native of Tyler County, where he attended public schools. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Salem College and a Master of Arts degree from West Virginia University. He has been awarded 12 Honorary Doctoral degrees from American colleges and universities.

Governor Underwood and his wife, Hovah, maintain a home in Huntington and are the parents of three grown children and grandparents of five.

Governor James B. Hunt, Jr.
North Carolina

Governor Jim Hunt, 61, is serving his historic fourth term as Governor with a dedication to improving the lives of North Carolina's children, and a strong commitment to ensuring that every child gets a quality public education.

Hunt, who has spent his life working to improve education, believes it is the foundation of North Carolina's success, and that all North Carolinians—educators, business and community leaders, policymakers and parents—must rededicate themselves to meeting that challenge and responsibility.

To reach this goal, Hunt unveiled the Excellent Schools Act, a four-year plan that will help North Carolina attract and keep good teachers. It raises standards and accountability for students and teachers, and includes performance pay to raise teacher pay to the national average.

With bipartisan support in the state legislature and strong support from the business and education communities, the Excellent Schools Act passed the General Assembly and Hunt signed it into law in June. The act ties teacher pay to performance, and demands more from all teachers, making it tougher to get and keep a license; making it tougher to get tenure, and making it easier to fire a bad teacher. The best teachers—who meet the very highest standards—will get the highest pay increases.

This pioneering approach which has garnered praise from President Bill Clinton and from national business and education leaders, is based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. This national education reform group, chaired by Hunt, sought out the best and most effective ways to attract and keep good teachers in the classroom.

Hunt also created the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which promotes excellence in teaching through voluntary National Board Certification. (North Carolina has more board-certified teachers than any other state.) Teachers who achieve National Board certification or receive a master's degree will receive bonuses under the Excellent Schools Act. Hunt served as chair for the NBPTS for 10 years, stepping down in October 1997. He now serves as the board's Founding Chair, helping to develop the board's policies and teaching assessments and lobbying Congress and state lawmakers to support certification for teachers.

In 1998, Hunt expanded his commitment to higher education by serving as the founding chair for the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, a non-profit, independent organization committed to ensuring educational opportunity, affordability, and quality in American higher education. Hunt was also recently named chairman of the National Education Goals Panel, which was set up in 1990 to monitor the progress of "Goals 2000," an achievement plan developed during a summit of the nation's governors.

Bill Porter

Bill Porter is executive director of Partnership for Learning in Seattle, Washington.

Partnership for Learning is a unique non-profit business coalition supported by the state's largest companies, including Boeing, Microsoft, Washington Mutual, GTE and Airborne Express. On behalf of the business community, the Partnership is charged with conducting a public outreach campaign to local communities and parents on the state's effort to raise standards in public schools and improve student performance. The Partnership's work involves targeted advertising, media, community meetings, reports, op-ed articles, public speaking, polling and grassroots advocacy. The goal is both to ensure ongoing political support for this effort and to mobilize grassroots involvement at the local level.

The Partnership's innovative communications work has been nationally recognized – including by the National Alliance of Business, which awarded the Partnership its 1998 Distinguished Performance Award for “State Business Coalition of the Year.”

Prior to moving to Seattle in May 1996 to direct Partnership for Learning, Porter served as director of policy in Colorado Governor Roy Romer's Office and oversaw policy development and implementation of education, environment, telecommunications and infrastructure issues. In particular, he worked closely with Governor Romer to shape and implement state education reform efforts in K-12 and higher education, including writing Colorado's charter school law and overseeing the development of a new system of standards and assessments for student performance in public schools. He also advised the Governor on his work with several national groups, including the National Education Goals Panel, the Business Roundtable and the Education Commission of the States. Before his work in the policy office, Porter lobbied the state Legislature for Roy Romer.

Porter graduated from The Colorado College with a B.A. in English.

Iris T. Metts, Ed.D.

Dr. Iris Metts was appointed by the Governor as Delaware's first Secretary of Education, to lead the state's educational reform initiative. She holds more than 30 years of professional, progressive experience, with service as the Superintendent of a nationally recognized school program comprised of more than 20,000 students.

Prior to becoming the Secretary of Education, Dr. Metts served as Superintendent of Schools for the Christina School District in Newark, Delaware. There, she dramatically improved the financial posture of the School District, increasing the reserves from \$125,00 to more than \$30 million while developing a budget process that allowed all schools greater budget control. Additional accomplishments included an award-winning pre/post testing program to monitor student progress, the securing of a \$1 million PEW Trust Fund Grant to align the District's instructional program with national and international standards through the New Standards Project, and the development of a technology program that outfitted classrooms with computers and schools with computer labs.

As an Assistant Superintendent of an Illinois school district, Dr. Metts managed the daily operation of a multi-ethnic district through coordination of efforts of the business, Curriculum, Personnel, Pupil Services, Research and Special Services Departments. She also served in the absence of the superintendent as the chief administrative officer.

In addition to attending Harvard University, Dr. Metts earned her Doctorate Degree from Virginia Polytechnic and State University, a Masters Degree from the College of William and Mary and a Bachelor's Degree from Hampton University.

Edgar D. Murphy, III

Edgar Murphy is currently Manager of Community Relations for Nortel Networks, a global telecommunications firm located in the Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. He is responsible for the development and implementation of Nortel's strategic community relations program.

Nortel's community relations program is focused on the improvement of K-12 public education in North Carolina. Edgar is well known at the regional and state level for his leadership in public education reform. He has served on the Durham Public Education Network board of directors, the Durham Workforce Partnership, the Center for Employment Training, and the executive committee of The NC State School Improvement Panel. In addition to his work in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, he also serves on the Total Quality Leadership Council for the Johnston County School System, located in eastern North Carolina.

Edgar has over twenty-five years of management experience spanning the automotive, aerospace and telecommunications industry. He has worked as a test engineer, manufacturing supervisor, human resources director, and customer services director in addition to his current role in public affairs. Edgar has developed a very diversified background since earning his degree in Industrial Technology from NC A&T State University in 1972. He has taken numerous classes and seminars over the years to keep up with the changes required in developing such a diverse career.

On a personal level, the role that means the most to him is being known as "Michelle's Dad." His role as a father is the driving force that keeps him focused on making a difference in our public education system.

State Senator Teel Bivins

Tell Bivins has served in the Texas Senate since 1989 when he won his first race for political office. In 1999 he will begin his fourth term in the Senate. His district runs from the top of the Panhandle to Midland-Odessa.

The Senator is chairman of the Education Committee. He also serves on the Finance and Natural Resources committees, and the Legislative Budget Board, which oversees the state's fiscal affairs and generates a proposed budget for each regular legislative session. Following the 75th Legislative session, Bivins was named one of the "Ten Best Legislators" by *Texas Monthly* magazine.

In 1996, the Association of Texas Professional Educators presented Bivins with the Judy Coyle Texas Liberty Award, the group's highest honor, which is given for outstanding service to public education.

Bivins is a Republican who supports local control of schools and term limits for state officials, and opposes a state income tax. He has successfully sponsored bills to overhaul trucking laws, institute tort reform and protect private property rights. Bivins also led a move in the Senate to direct the state to begin issuing welfare benefits electronically, thus reducing waste and fraud.

Bivins, a West Texas native, lives in Amarillo. He continues his family's four-generation involvement in ranching as a cattleman and businessman. He is also active in oil and gas exploration.

Governor Thomas R. Carper Delaware

Governor Tom Carper became Delaware's 71st Chief Executive on January 19, 1993, after serving five terms as Delaware's Congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives and six years as State Treasurer. With a second gubernatorial win under his belt in 1996, he has been elected to statewide office 10 times – more than anyone in Delaware history.

Born in Beckley, West Virginia on January 23, 1947, Carper grew up in Danville, Virginia. He attended Ohio State University, graduating in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in economics. He completed five years of service as a Naval flight officer, serving in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam war.

In 1973, Carper moved to Delaware to earn an MBA at the University of Delaware. He worked in Delaware's economic development office from 1975 to 1976, and then was elected State Treasurer at age 29 – serving three consecutive terms. As Treasurer, he established Delaware's first cash management system and played a major role in improving the state's credit rating from worst in the nation to a respectable "AA" rating.

Carper was elected in 1982 to the U.S. House of Representatives. As Congressman, he chaired the House Subcommittee on Economic Stabilization and was a member of the Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee, as well as the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee.

As Governor since 1993, Carper has focused on job creation, overhauling the state's education and welfare systems, strengthening families and reducing teenage pregnancy; and improving the state's credit rating while lowering taxes and preventing crime.

In July of 1998, Carper was tapped as Chairman of the National Governors' Association. During his Chairmanship, Carper will focus on helping to improve student performance nationwide by promoting educational accountability, expanding learning opportunities, and harnessing technology. Using Delaware's welfare reform plan as a model for other states, he has provided extensive leadership in the area of national welfare reform.

Carper is also a former member of the nation's nine-member Amtrak Board of Directors.